249 either in the natural state or in the form of black, pasty, molasses-laden sugar.

There are several varieties, the chief of which are the heavy, green cane which is highly cellulated, and the small violet-colored cane with joints closer together, which is fuller than the first.

Farming methods do not differ from those used in other countries. Cuttings are planted, and the plants are topped if they show a marked propensity to excessive leafy growth.

257 To manufacture sugar, the cane is crushed between two vertical
407 cylinders driven by two wooden gears of a most ingenious construction. A buffalo turns the whole by means of a crossbar or shaft, the end of which is attached to its neck and constitutes a whim. Sometimes the cane is crushed between two pieces of stone or hardwood, one of which rests on the ground while the other [364] is applied on top of it by means of a wooden lever. One or several persons work the other end of the lever with all their weight and move it up and down in a series of
[439] jerky motions. The juice extracted from the cane is placed in large
[415] cast iron cauldrons shaped like cupels, which are imported by Chinese merchants. Condensation takes place over an open fire laid in primitive hearths which are cut into the ground itself, if it is clayey. When the syrup reaches the desired degree of thickness the whole mass is poured into rectangular or circular molds made of wood or bamboo. After cooling the loaves of sugar which come from the molds, and which are from three to six centimeters thick, are wrapped in dry leaves. They are transported and sold in this form. The cane itself is called "Oi" and the sugar "Nam-Oi" or, literally, water of cane.

[276] The Laotians do not refine alcohol from the juice of sugar cane,
101 and are even ignorant of the initial refining stage which the Annamites use and which produces brown sugar.

[435] The price of sugar on the markets of Laos varies from one point to another, and transactions involve small quantities only. Statistics do give evidence, however, from which market prices of 35 to 50 francs per hundred kilograms can be deduced.

249 INDIGO. We have seen above that the Laotians use the indigo-bearing properties of certain plants which grow wild in the forests in order to dye cloth goods blue. They also produce a variety of indigo, the Indigofera tinctoria, which is similar to the variety found in Bengal. The plant itself is called "Kok-Kame" and the extract or dye "Nam-Kame